



ELLON HILLWALKING CLUB

Newsletter – December 2010

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Programme:

Monday 13th December 2010

Christmas Party

Station Hotel 20:00

Sunday 19th December 2010

Ben Rinnes

Focal Pt Alan Murray (01224 319716)

Community Centre Carpark 08:30

Ben Rinnes OS Sheet 28

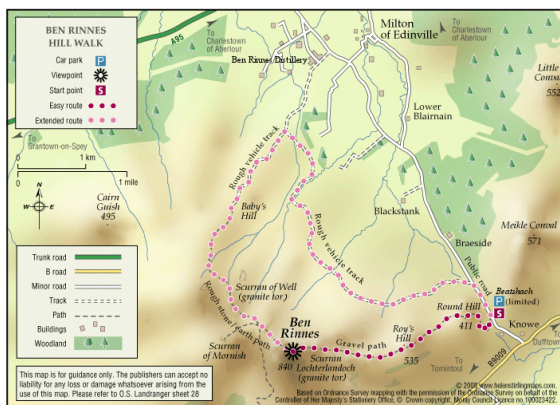
Ben Rinnes (Headland Hill), a very prominent landmark, commands glorious views over the Laich of Moray and across the Moray Firth to the hills of Ross, Sutherland and Caithness.

The quickest route up and down the hill starts at the small car park in the Beatshach on the B9009 (GR 285359). There is a good track over Round Hill and Roy's Hill to the summit which is a granite tor with the grand name of Scurran of Lochterlandoch. The trip there and back via this route is about 7.5 km with 550m of ascent – about 3 hours.

The usual starting point for Ellon Hillwalking Club visits has, however, been the Ben Rinnes Distillery (GR 259397). The track from here goes to Baby's Moss which is incorrectly labelled Baby's Hill on the OS map. This is named after a young lady called Barbara who was buried here in the days when suicide victims could not be buried in consecrated ground. From the old peat workings, the route heads across open, and in places boggy, ground to the rocky tor called Scurran of Well on the map. From here it is easy to find a route across the summit plateau to Scurran of Lochterlandoch. The return can be made by reversing the first route for part of the way and then dropping down to a track which follows the base of the north slopes back to the distillery. These northern slopes were the scene of a terrible air crash in 1943. A Wellington Bomber based at Lossiemouth, crashed into the hill whilst on a navigational exercise and all five crew members died. A former member of the ground crew who went to the site on the hill shortly after the crash described it as "the most complete burn-out he had ever seen". There are still a few fragments of the plane to be found and the outline of the crash site is still clearly visible from the north side of the hill where the ground was scarred so badly that nothing will grow there even today.

This route is about 14 km with 750m of ascent – between 5 and 6 hours.

This very helpful map of these routes was found on the Moray Ways website



This walk should be suitable for any reasonably fit member of the club but it is winter so bring plenty of food and warm clothes.

If you want to take part, let Alan Murray (01224 869896) know by

Thursday 19 December

Membership cards 2011

We are looking out for a nice photo suitable for next year's membership card. Any contributions should be e-mailed to Allan Brown at allan.brown@tiscali.co.uk at any time before Christmas.

Forthcoming Events

Jan 10 th	AGM
Jan 16 th	Geallaig Hill
Feb 20 th	Possible Winter Skills Day

Problem-solving on Meall a' Bhuaichaille

Mike Taylor (with some help from Sheena)

The Mountain Weather Information Service promised a fine clear day, but problem solving abilities were called upon from the very start of our first winter walk of the season: I was asked to produce my minibus driver's licence number before Dyce Community Minibus would be entrusted to my care. I didn't have it, but a phone call home produced the number...and the date, 1981! As the seven of us - Gordon, Malcolm, Margaret, Les, Ian, Ingrid and I - approached the Cairngorms, however, the clouds clearly were not going to be as high up as MWIS predicted. There was rain or snow in prospect. Finding an open convenience for the traditional pre-walk toilet stop posed another early challenge. Someone in Glenmore had obviously made the executive decision there would be little need for public facilities in November. Most of the doors were 'hard', but thankfully not all. Not the best of starts.

On the way to Ryvoan we passed An Lochan Uaine (The Green Lochan), where we considered the relative merits of theories on how the green colour had been acquired; algae, minerals deposits of mica, or the most favoured explanation, fairies washing their green clothes, with Fairy Liquid, no doubt!

When we visited the bothy at Ryvoan, which has had some attention and is looking good, another set of decision-making and problem-solving opportunities presented themselves. A clearly legible note placed prominently on a purple *Thermarest*, next to a neatly rolled sleeping bag told us that Jo (surname withheld to preserve anonymity) had set out on the walk we were about to undertake and would be back at about 4.00 pmon Saturday 13 November. There was a mobile phone number and the writer was now about 18 hours overdue.

We reasoned that Jo had to be female as (a) she had a purple thermarest; (b) could write legibly; (c) spelt her name without an 'e'. Poirot would have been proud of us. Being a responsible group of hillwalkers we decided we should try to contact Jo and, if we didn't succeed, Mountain Rescue would have to be notified. As there was no mobile phone reception, this would have to wait until we were further up our mountain.

We had not spent very long in the bothy, but long enough for the world to have turned white in the meantime. We set off up the hill in really good quality snow along a new, paved footpath, which we were to discover was there for almost all of our walk. We stopped quite often to check for mobile phone reception. Nothing to do with the gradient, of course! Eventually, Ingrid's Vodafone service won the day, but no response could be raised from Jo's number. The Police were duly contacted and given what information we had. We continued our walk with much conjecture on Jo's fate.

Had she got the date wrong? Was she lying, frozen somewhere on the hillside, close by or far away, undetected in the poor visibility? On reaching the summit we looked north through the mist imagining the wonderful view of the Northern Corries described in all the guidebooks. As we came down the slope, the sky began to clear a little to reveal some beautiful atmospheric views over Rothiemurcus, moist green conifers appearing in contrast to the swirling low cloud. A number of calls from Mountain Rescue came in to check the details we had given. Finally, just as we approached the Reindeer Centre, Ingrid got a call saying Jo had been contacted. She was out on the hill again today with some friends and had just forgotten to remove the note she left yesterday!

Quite an achievement we thought to sleep on top of her note on Saturday night and then, when leaving her gear very tidily on Sunday morning, not to notice the note prominently displayed on top of her *Thermarest*. Aye, that'll be right! We agreed we had had a good day out. We didn't see as much scenery as we would have liked, but had a very pleasant walk through some fresh snow and a mystery to keep us entertained. We had also enjoyed convivial company for a very nice tea and cakes at the café near the dry ski slope in Glenmore immediately after the walk and a bar supper at the Mash Tun in Aberlour on the way home to our comfortable beds.

2011 Draft Programme

Comments are welcomed – please talk to any member of the committee. The Monday evening presentations are all provisional – not all the suggested speakers have been approached yet!

Month	Date	Event	Time	Focal Point
Jan	10 16	AGM & Slide Show (AB) Geallaig Hill	20:00 08:30	Irene Jamieson
Feb	14 20	Tanzania – Marion Harley Winter Skills Day – Alan Crichton?	20:00 08:00	
Mar	14 20	Transition Extreme evening Beinglas wigwam weekend; Alternative Sunday walk Clachnaben	20:00 08:30	
Apr	11 17	Hurtigruten Trip – Mike Taylor Carn an Tuirc / Carn o Claise / Tolmount / Tom Buidhe	20:00 07:30	
May	9 14/15 15	Skye Weekend – Sligachan bunkhouse Beinn Iutharn Mhor	20:00 07:30	
Jun	13 19	Lenabo (Forestry Comm guided walk) Lochnagar – Black Spout (LHB)	19:00 07:00	
Jul	11 17	Haddo and Prop of Ythsie Cairn an Tagairt Mor – the Stuic	19:00 07:00	
Aug	8 14	Collieston Coastal Walk Cairngorm area and the Shelter Stone	19:00 07:00	
Sep	12 18	Instructional DVD Carn an Righ from Spittal of Glenshee	20:00 07:00	
Oct	10 16 30/31	Tierra de Fuego – Bob Davis Culardoch Kinlochewe Bunkhouse Weekend	20:00 08:00	
Nov	14 20	Albania – Allan Brown Mount Blair and Dubh Craig & Bar Supper	20:00 07:30	
Dec	12 18	Christmas Party Craig nan Gabhar	20:00 08:30	